

## Showcasing Customer Service Superstars!

For the next year, the winners of the 2008 Governor's Customer Service Awards will be showcased in the new Capitol Commons Cafeteria in the Floyd Towers in Atlanta.

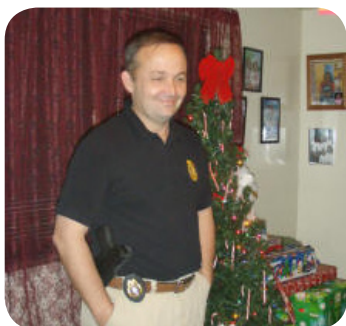
Thanks to Steve Stancil, Steve Fanczi and the Georgia Building Authority for designating this space to honor Team Georgia's customer service superstars!

The 16 winning employees and teams were selected from 636 nominations submitted by 49 agencies. To read their stories, please visit <http://team.georgia.gov> and click on "Customer Service."



*Top winners include the Dept. of Revenue (Agency of the Year), Victor L. Walker (Employee of the Year), Malika Reed Wilkins (Champion of the Year) and Greg Dozier (Leadership).*

## Parole Officer Fulfills Christmas Wish



For almost a year, Assistant Chief Parole Officer Cole Blackburn (pictured above) in the LaGrange Parole Office supervised a parolee with special needs. His transition back into society was made more difficult by medical issues and the loss of social security benefits.

"Cole spent about five hours a week with the parolee, taking him to and from mental health appointments and sitting with him for hours to make sure his papers were filled out right," said Chief Parole Officer Andy Zimmerman. "He even worked with him to get his social security reinstated. Much of that time was outside of his regular job hours."

Blackburn further exceeded expectations when he presented his parolee with a basketball goal for Christmas. "He had nothing but the clothes on his back when he came to me," said Blackburn.

"So he was ecstatic when I showed up with the gift. He didn't know it was coming."

### Service that motivates

Blackburn's service has motivated his colleagues in LaGrange and other regional offices. "His dedication to this case influenced others to go above and beyond in all of their cases," said Zimmerman. "He has definitely led by example."

Lending a helping hand to parolees is a task that Blackburn welcomes with passion.

### A positive change

"I really wanted to see him succeed," said Blackburn. "We have so many parolees who don't succeed on parole, but in this case, everything clicked in place and I knew he was going to be able to make it."

Blackburn maintains that excellent customer service is vital to improving the lives of all parolees.

"It makes me feel great inside to make a positive change in someone's life," he said. "If I didn't provide great customer service, where would he be today?"

## Change Agents & Agencies



### Brad Douglas: In touch with customers

*Brad Douglas, Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS), took part in a special interview about customer service. DOAS is responsible for a broad range of services including risk management, purchasing, fleet management, document solutions and surplus property.*

### How are you staying in touch with your customers?

When I arrived nearly three years ago, I asked other agencies about DOAS. Then we took feedback from our customers as our strategic direction and focus.

We have improved tremendously in the last few years due to measuring our customer satisfaction levels. I instituted a rule that each email generated by DOAS staff contains a tagline with a link to "How's My Service?" This provides us with real-time feedback to the service our customers have just received.

### How has your focus on customers impacted service at DOAS?

Our Customer Service Champion, Terry Newsom, helps keep us reminded of our various customer service initiatives. We have also installed video display monitors to help spread our customer service messaging. DOAS staff on all three of our floors in the Floyd Building view these monitors daily for the latest customer service tips and messages.

Rather than building a separate customer service function within our

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## Inspired to Be the Best!

*Employees share what Team Georgia's Customer Service movement means to them.*

More than 525 employees answered our December survey about Team Georgia's customer service movement. Congratulations to our gift card winners, Mary Griffin from the Dept. of Community Health and Pamela Card from the Dept. of Revenue!

Here's a sampling of the comments we received. Read additional responses online at <http://team.georgia.gov> in the "Customer Service" section.

### "What inspires me most is..."

"...That Georgia as a whole is **rising above the nation** with regards to customer service."

- Anita Poole, Juvenile Justice

"...When a customer asks for my name, I am **proud** to give it knowing that I have helped this individual as much as possible."

- Linda Davis, GBI



"...It is really **rewarding** to have someone say, 'Of all the people I have spoken with today, you have been the most helpful.'"

- Wondra Hughes, Revenue

"...I want everyone I speak and deal with on a daily basis to have a **positive experience** with the job I do for the state of Georgia."

- Beverly Parker, Pardons & Paroles



"...This movement allows all state employees the chance to show customers that **Georgia has the best people** working in each agency."

- Janet Sizemore, DHR Office of Investigative Services

"...Knowing that there are many, many state employees who really care enough to help others. **Georgia is a giving state.**"

- Elizabeth Echols, DCH

"...By banding agencies together as Team Georgia, we are better able to provide a **united front** of excellent service to citizens."

- Kristen Hopping, Revenue

"...**Helping people** by giving them the right information or directing where they need to be going, instead of having them go back and forth, especially when their time is just as valuable as mine."

- Iliana Davis, Public Safety

## Change Agent (cont.)

agency, we instead knew that customer service needed to be embedded in everything we do.

### What customer service advice would you offer to state employees?

Providing great customer service is simple, really. I have a motto we use around our office: we need to manage the state's money as if it were our own. That's how I run a business. With customer service, it's much the same way. You simply provide the level of service you'd like to have provided to you. I try to instill this in all our staff and use it as a guiding principle whenever possible.

### What do you enjoy about being the Commissioner of DOAS?

I absolutely love my job. I have never worked so hard and yet enjoyed my role as much as this one.

Here at DOAS, we provide various back-office services to all state government. If we provide great service, you should never realize we were part of the solution.

For example, we have recently delivered several key procurements without a vendor protest, and agencies have been able to move forward with their business without hindrance. That's true progress.

### How do you keep customer service a priority as a Commissioner?

There's an old saying, "leaders know the way, show the way and go the way." As Commissioner, everyone looks to me for answers and guidance. I have to always put my best foot forward and exemplify great customer service in all that I do.

We realize that our staff are customers as well. Providing great customer service becomes a way of life. Constant communication and focus helps keep our core customer service principles in mind, and that's a big help to the staff as well.

### What is your favorite part of the holiday season?

Although I am an Atlanta native, I love colder weather, and I am an avid outdoorsman. I always cherish my time spent with family and friends during the holiday season.

## Governor's Office of Customer Service

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